

Saturday Review

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What the U.N. Can Do—If It Will

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The author of the following guest editorial is director of the World Rule of Law Center at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.*

THE initiation by the United Nations of two more peace-keeping operations—in Cyprus and on the South Vietnam-Cambodia border—supplies a good occasion for reminding ourselves of the changed character of the peace-keeping task since World War II.

We have all heard people say: "What good is the U.N. if it cannot stop a major power from launching a nuclear attack?" Or, "If the land armies of the Soviet Union started crunching across Central Europe, what could those fifteen judges in the World Court do to stop them?"

The answer is: that is not the way wars start now.

Since 1945 there has been a marked downturn in the prospect of direct armed conflict between major powers—and a marked upsurge in direct armed conflict between smaller countries.

The reason for the former is the nuclear deadlock. The reason for the latter is the breakup of the colonial empires. Whatever else may be said of colonialism, it necessarily minimized the opportunities for military clashes among its component parts. Now, with dozens of new nation-states free to arm themselves, with ancient hatreds—communal, religious, tribal—unrestrained by a strong colonial power, and with the major powers as willing as in the past to fish in such troubled waters, the main everyday peace-keeping job has changed.

The significance of this fact is that the United Nations, even with its present limitations, has the techniques and the power to deal with such conflicts—always assuming that its members want it to do so. We can therefore spend less time worrying about the U.N.'s obvious inability to coerce a nuclear power bent on direct military aggression, and more time exploiting techniques for controlling the local conflicts that are a prime threat to peace, because almost all of them have the capacity for exploding into major wars.

The U.N.'s peace-keeping techniques have been devised—indeed, one might almost say improvised—to meet a variety of demands during the past eighteen years. Enough experience has now been gained to make it useful to sort these techniques into categories, so that when situations like Cyprus and South Vietnam come along, the existence of precedents will facilitate prompt adoption of suitable devices. A checklist of these techniques, in descending order of forcefulness, would include:

Regular fighting force: Under direct U.N. command, authorized by Security Council, to control internal disorder containing threat to international peace: U.N. force in the Congo (ONUC). Under U.N. aegis but national command, authorized by Security Council, to resist aggression: Korean action.

Armed buffer force and border patrol: Under direct U.N. command, authorized by General Assembly, to separate hostile forces of Israel and Egypt: United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF).

Control of subversive border crossings:

Authorized by General Assembly, to observe and report on compliance with resolutions calling for end of aid to Communist guerrillas in Greek Civil War: the U.N. Special Committee on the Balkans (UNSCOB). Authorized by Security Council, to check on illegal infiltrations into Lebanon to foment revolt: the U.N. Observer Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL). Authorized by Security Council, and financed by the parties, to eliminate foreign involvement in Yemeni civil war: United Nations Yemen Observation Mission (UNYOM).

Truce supervision: Authorized by Security Council, to observe compliance with cease-fire between India and Pakistan in Kashmir: United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP). Authorized by Security Council, to report on observance of General Armistice Agreements between Israel and Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria: U.N. Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO).

Territorial administration: Established by Secretary-General, authorized by General Assembly, and financed by the parties, to administer territory of West Irian (West New Guinea) during transfer from Netherlands to Indonesia, supported by an armed U.N. police force: U.N. Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA).

ONE value of this kind of checklist is that it demonstrates that, even without looking beyond tried techniques, the U.N. can today piece together the components necessary to cope with a wide variety of contingencies. Is the problem one of subversive crossing of borders, as in South Vietnam? We have the precedent of the Lebanon action—and it is gratifying that the beginnings of a control action appear to have been undertaken in respect to South Vietnam's border with Cambodia. Is the problem one of maintaining a cease-fire, as in Cyprus? There are the lessons of Kashmir and the Middle East. Is the problem lack of money, as in every current action? There is the device of having individual parties or contributing countries pay the bill, as in Korea, Yemen, West Irian, and Cyprus. Is the problem inability to get Security Council action? There are the precedents of UNEF, the Greek action, and the West Irian action for General Assembly action.

If there is a problem, then, of effective use by members of U.N. facilities to control this type of conflict, the problem is not "can't"—it is "won't." It is to be hoped that this "won't" will steadily recede as all nations, particularly the major powers, fully comprehend the mutuality of their interest in the systematic control of any apparently minor or local armed conflict that could escalate into general war.

—ARTHUR LARSON.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Garbage in the Air

N.C.'s INTEREST in air pollution in the United States [SR, June 6] is useful in adding to the "atmosphere of concern" and making it less fashionable to be an air polluter at home, at work, or on the way to and from. The present low percentage of sales expended by the owners of the sources of air pollution need be increased only slightly. The added price to the customers for clean air will always be very small in relation to the costs of dirty air. The government tax costs for air pollution control, ordinary fact-finding, and research might be equal to the cost of one or two car washes per year.

But it seems that every community and high level of government requires at least one man or woman who has no ax to grind and will devote concentrated attention and personal time to push for cleaner air. The impact of such an individual on lethargy or diffused responsibility is astounding whenever it takes place.

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Morgantown, W. Va.

N.C.'s EDITORIAL "Garbage in the Air" provided some much-needed focus for the "brooding omnipresence" that is air pollution. He might have added that local and state governmental expenditures for abatement and control of air pollution in 1963 were a mere \$12,000,000, half of which was used in California.

By way of correction and balance, let it be pointed out that the U.S. Surgeon General has produced reports on air pollution and has conducted two national conferences of experts, in 1958 and 1962. A principal conclusion of the 1962 conference was that the chief contributor to air pollution is the motor vehicle. Also, to ignore the leading and informed efforts of Senator Edmund Muskie, chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Air and Water Pollution, is unfortunate. For Senator Muskie, far more than any other Senator, has been responsible for bringing together information and reactions from all over the country through the hearings he has conducted in the past nine months. Moreover, he was the chief backer of the Clean Air Act, signed into law last December, which for the first time gives the federal government limited enforcement powers to deal with interstate air pollution problems.

JAMES P. ANDERSON.

Winsted, Conn.

Unanswered Questions

THREE CHEERS TO Henry Brandon [STATE OF AFFAIRS, May 9] for bringing up the worldwide suspicion about who or what really killed the late President Kennedy. Lest the U.S. public be lulled into believing that all is clear now and that the world shares its conviction, I present a few observations from the other side of the Pacific.



1. Despite the strenuous efforts of some to impose upon the world the Oswald-alone-was-the-villain concept, nobody here seems satisfied. Or, rather, we aren't questioning much, which is still worse; there seems to prevail an unuttered understanding to the effect that "What veracity can you expect from American sources on this kind of matter?"

2. A mass-circulation monthly magazine here a couple of months ago carried an article by an American journalist that attributed the incident to a carefully plotted conspiracy and three well-prepared killers. It was claimed that the article was shunned by American journalism and was published only outside the U.S.

3. The Tokyo chief of the Associated Press wrote a rebuttal to the above article in a major daily newspaper. While maintaining the same "Oswald is the killer" tone, he contradicted other accounts at several critical points, such as the time it took the killer to fire the three shots and the reason the third bullet entered the President's body from the front, not back.

4. I have on my desk a copy of the November 20, 1963, issue of the *Christian Century*, with a headline reading "Dallas Image Unveiled." Ominously dated only two days before the assassination, it relates the kind of climate Dallas had been in: General Edwin Walker telling the cheering crowd that "the Communists and Alger Hiss and that crowd" started the U.N.; Ambassador Stevenson harassed, booed, spat upon, and hit on the head; the *Dallas Morning News* choosing not to identify the hecklers as "rightists"; Congressman Bruce Alger flatly refusing to apologize "for a community that has done no wrong"; and the general public's complacent silence except "only when the Dallas image as a city hospitable to business enterprise is threatened."

5. After all these, and with due respect for the statement of Elmo Roper [SR, May 9] that the truer face of America is law-abiding (who questions *that?*), it should still strain anybody's conscience if, whoever the killer may be, he alone were held responsible and all the rest remained innocent and happy—as if the killer were only an unfortunate exception in a basically sane and healthy climate.

I most sincerely hope that the Presidential commission will do its utmost to clear once and for all the lingering odor of suspicion and whitewashing. No assassination of an American President is a mere U.S. domestic affair. This is inevitably an event of global significance, and the world needs to be convinced.

TETSUO TAMAMA.

Osaka, Japan

The Boozy Blue Yonder

AS AN AIRLINE PILOT, I heartily agree with John Ciardi's remarks regarding the quality of airline coffee [SR, June 6], and I quail at the prospect of another two decades spent in drinking it.

However, his view on unlimited, indiscriminate drinking by passengers is irresponsible. I have experienced one occasion in which a drunk staggered into the cockpit and sprawled himself over me during take-off, and the prospect of this happening again makes me shudder. Surely if the flight crew can manage to abstain from alcohol for twenty-four hours before a flight, John Ciardi can struggle without a drink for the duration of it.

And if, as he admits, his lecture tours are so lucrative, why is he flying steerage anyway?

GEORGE A. FULFORD.

El Segundo, Calif.